

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA San Diego, California

***United States Attorney
Karen P. Hewitt***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - February 10, 2009

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that Kirtar Munshi was sentenced by the Honorable Larry Alan Burns to serve twelve months in custody, a \$6,000 fine and was ordered to forfeit profits of \$219,000 as a result of his role in an internet pharmacy scheme.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Melanie K. Pierson, who prosecuted the case, Munshi pled guilty in July 2008, to conspiracy to import merchandise contrary to law, commit mail fraud, and introduce into interstate commerce an unapproved drug, during the period from January 2006 to April 2008. Munshi further admitted that he agreed to supply tablets and capsules containing the active ingredients found in prescription pharmaceuticals such as Viagra, Cialis and Levitra, manufactured in India, to the operator of an internet pharmacy for shipment to over 250 individuals throughout the United States.

At the time of his plea, Munshi admitted that he knew that these “generic” copies of the prescription pharmaceuticals manufactured in India were not approved for sale in the United States by the Food and Drug Administration. Munshi acknowledged that the pharmaceuticals were sold via telephone solicitation, mail

order and via the internet to customers who did not possess a lawfully issued prescription for the drugs, and customers were falsely assured they could lawfully purchase these pharmaceuticals. Munshi stated that the value of the illegal pharmaceuticals he sold was between \$200,000 and \$400,000.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in conjunction with the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, the Food and Drug Administration Office of Criminal Investigations and the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

United States Attorney Hewitt stated, “This prosecution demonstrates our commitment to address the very real threat to public health and safety posed by those who traffic in unapproved pharmaceutical products.”

FBI Special Agent in Charge Keith Slotter said, “Today’s sentencing speaks loudly to those who jeopardize American public health through the sale of illegally imported non-FDA approved medicines from abroad. Cheap medicine purchased via the internet is no bargain.”

“IRS Criminal Investigation, in cooperation with our law enforcement partners will continue to hold accountable those individuals who put personal financial gain above the safety and well-being of the general public,” said Acting Special Agent in Charge Thomas Jankowski, IRS-Criminal Investigation, Los Angeles Field Office.

DEFENDANT

Criminal Case No. 08cr2105-LAB

Kirtar Munshi

SUMMARY of CHARGES

Conspiracy, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371
Forfeiture, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 982

AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division
Food and Drug Administration, Office of Criminal Investigations
Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement